“ROLEOF MAHARASHTRA RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE SCHEME IN UPLIFTMENT OF BE-LOW POVERTY LINE FAMILIES IN TRIBAL BELT : WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KINWAT BLOCK”

Abstract submitted to

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Introduction:

India has been experiencing a consistently high growth rate in the last two decades. It has done well in indicators like economic growth, exports, balance of payments, resilience to external shocks, service sector growth, significant accumulation of foreign exchange, information technology (IT) and stock market, improvements in telecommunications, etc. and is now considered as a major emerging economic power. The result has been a reduction in income poverty levels and improvements in several indicators of human development including food security, literacy, health and access to basic amenities. In spite of these positive developments, India still has some of the lowest indicators of human development in the world. Exclusion occurs among regions, social and marginal groups, women and children. The Constitution's commitment to equality, coupled with increasing emphasis on equality of women, has had only a limited impact in reducing disparity and discrimination against them. Health, nutrition and quality education have failed to reach all children.

The 11th Five Year Plan has advocated inclusive policies for reducing poverty and achieving equity. In this context, social protection programmes can play an important role in improving inclusive development.

By now, it is well recognised that rural works programmes (RWPs) become important instruments in the strategies for alleviating poverty and hunger in many developing countries. The case for rural works program lies in the self-targeting nature of the schemes. There is a growing theoretical and empirical literature on the impact of public work programmes on poverty alleviation. It is supposed to enable the social planners to separate the non-poor from poor by connecting income transfers to participation in public works. This also fits in with the ideas of Ragner Nurkse (1957) who regards surplus labour in low-income countries a potential source of saving useful for capital formulation.

Particularly at times of famine, employment on public works became the main and most effective element of strategies for famine prevention in India under British rule (World Bank, 1990). After independence in 1947, the central Government, beginning with the Rural Manpower Program in 1960, sponsored many such schemes. However, the most important program at the state level is Maharashtra's Employment Guarantee scheme (MGES), introduced in 1972. This was one of the most researched and discussed programs in the country and commended by the UNDP's Human Development Report (1993) as one of the largest public works programs in the developing world.

Definition of poverty:

Poverty can be defined as a phenomenon in which section of the society is unable to fulfil even its basic necessities of life. When a substantial segment of society is deprived of the minimum level of living and continues at a bare subsistence level, that society is said to be plagued with mass poverty.

The countries of the third world exhibit invariably the existence of mass poverty, although pockets of poverty exist even in the developed countries of Europe and America.

In India, the generally accepted definition of poverty emphasizes minimum level of living rather than a reasonable level of living.

Poverty measurement and studies in India:

Poverty estimates are generally made based on NSSO consumption data. For such estimates, the choice for a norm is very important. A working group set up by the planning commission in 1962 recommended a national minimum consumption level of Rs. 20 per capita month at 1960-61 prices. This estimate was based on the balanced diet recommended by the Nutrition Advisory Committee

of the Indian Council of Medical Research. Based on the NSSO data, Dandekar and Rath (1971) have estimated Rs. 15 and Rs. 22.50 per capita per month at 1960-61 prices as the poverty lines for rural and urban India, respectively, corresponding to a per capital daily intake of 2,250 calories. The Planning Commission (1981) adopted a similar approach when it estimated the poverty lines as the midpoint of the monthly per capita expenditure class having a daily per capita intake of 2,400 in rural areas and 2,100 in urban areas.

Montek Ahluwalia (1977) studies the trends in incidence of rural poverty in India for the period 1956-57 to 1973-74. He used an expenditure level concept of poverty lines. Rs. 15 in 1960-61 prices for rural areas and Rs. 20 for urban areas.

The most important finding of Montek Ahluwalia's study is that the proportion of rural poverty declined initially from over 50 per cent in mid fifties to around 40 per cent in 1960-61, rose sharply through the mid sixties, reaching a peak in 1967-68 and then declined again.

The Indian Statistical Institute updated the poverty lines in current prices, to reach Rs. 55.20 (rural) and Rs. 68.60 (urban) for 1977-78 and Rs. 89.00 (rural) and Rs. 112.00 (urban) for 1983.

B.S.Minhas, L.R.Jain and S.D.Tendulkar (1991) have made a study of incidence of poverty for the period 1970-71 to 1987-88. With the help of NSS data. In this study for rural and urban India taken together, the incidence of poverty declined from 56.3 per cent in 1970-71 to 48.1 percent in 1983 and further to 45.9 percent in 1987-88.

The tenth plan accepted that 26 per cent of the population i.e. 260 million persons were below the poverty line in 1999-2000.Out of these 75 per cent (195 million) were in the rural areas and 25 per cent (65 million) were in the urban

areas. And India accounts for 22 per cent of the world's poor. However, most of the poor would be concentrated in six states- Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Maharashtra. The six states would have 164 million poor (i.e. 75 per cent of the total poor) in 2006-07. The Planning Commission poverty projection for 2006-07 is given in the table below.

Poverty projection for 2006-07

	Rural	Urban	Total
No. Of the poor (million)	171	49	220
Percentage of poor (%)	21.1	15.1	19.3

Source: Planning Commission, Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07)

Economists may have difference in methodology and thus their estimates may vary in magnitude. However, there is a consensus on two things i.e. percentage of population below the poverty line has started to come down because of the impact of the direct programmes for poverty alleviation. Still the proportion of population below the poverty line is about 20 per cent as per the tenth plan, which can be considered high. Secondly, the absolute number of the poor has certainly increased over the years.

It is necessary to know who the poor are for poverty alleviation programmes and policies. It necessary to know the social, economic and geographical identify of the poor, for the effective implementation of any policy to improve their situation.

In India, scheduled caste and scheduled tribes face a high risk of poverty, these are among the structural poor. They not only lack economic resources but their poverty is strongly linked to social identity by caste.

Anti-poverty programmes:

The existing major programmes for the poor in India can be broadly divided into the following three categories.

1) Wage Employment Programmes.

2) Credit Based Employment programmes.

3) Public Distribution System (PDS) and nutrition programmes (ICDC).

The policy prescription for the poverty alleviation that follows from this situation is growth of national income with stress on agriculture, and government's expenditure should be directed to enhance physical infrastructure and build human resources. Expenditure on education and health will help increase productivity to make the most of employment opportunities created by growth.

With a rapid growth in the number of poor people, who because they lack assets, cannot benefit directly or immediately from credit-based employment programs, recognising this Government of India introduced target-group oriented programs that transfer income or employment benefit to the poor. Several anti-poverty target-group-oriented programmes were initiated in different five-year plans.

The Small Farmer Development Agency (SFDA) (1969-70), Agency for the Development of Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labours (MFAL) (1969-70), Drought Prone Area Program (DPAP) (1969-70), Crash Scheme For Rural Employment (CSRE) (1070), Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) (1972-73), Food For Work Program (FFW) (1977), Antyodaya (1977), Operation Bara (OB) (1978) are some examples.

National Rural Employment Program (NREP) and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Program (RLEGP) were introduced in the sixth plan.

Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP), Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM) and Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), were also introduced in sixth plan.

All these programmes, whether initiated by the central or state Governments or both, share the fundamental objective of poverty elimination mainly through employment creation i.e. over time some of these were merged with others or modified self-employment programmes.

Among these programmes, the Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) of Maharashtra stand out for its coverage of some 600,000 jobs per day in Maharashtra and for general success. The program generates productive assets as 60 per cent of the total EGS expenditure was spent on irrigation and soil conversation works that can be very productive in a semi-arid region. Unfortunately, no systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of these assets in increasing agricultural productivity is available.

Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS):

The EGS as a public employment scheme has its origin way back in 1965, when it was designed as a state-level response to diverse economic and demographic trends in rural Maharashtra.

A pilot project in Tasgaon block of sangli district was operated as in Integrated Area Development Scheme, commonly known as ‘Page Scheme’ after the late V.S.Page, a Gandhian leader and activist, who originally conceived it. During the 1971 elections, the state congress party committed itself to a 15-point program to tackle the problems of poverty and unemployment. To fulfil its elec-

tion promise, the government extended the EGS to all the rural areas in the state in 1972, but soon afterwards the scheme was suspended during the peak drought period from late 1972 to early 1974, when it was superseded by central government programmes.

A novel element in this assistance package was the crash scheme for rural employment, introduced by Prime Minister Indra Gandhi in 1971 as a part of her ***'garibi hatao'*** (abolish poverty) program.

Employment Guarantee Scheme: Expenditure and Employment Created:

The EGS provides a guarantee of employment to all adults above 18 years of age who are willing to do unskilled manual work on a piece rate basis. The scheme is self-targeting in nature. The main objectives of the EGS are to improve household welfare in the short run and contribute to the development of the rural economy in the long run through strengthening rural infrastructure.

The expenditure under EGS for the period 1972-73 is Rs. 1.9 crores, 1985-86 is Rs.272.24 crores and in the year 2000-01 Rs.578 crores.

The employment created under EGS in the year 1972-73 was 45 lakh person days and is reached peak in 1985-86 to 18.95 crores person-days. After that in the year, 2000-01 11.12 crore person days employment is generated under EGS.

Percentage of Poverty: Maharashtra and India

Year	Maharashtra	All India
1973-74	53.2	54.9
1993-94	36.9	36.0
2004-05*	38.2	37.2
2009-10*	24.5	29.8

Source: Economic Survey of Maharashtra 2012-13

*Tendulkar committee's report was published on 19th March 2012

It would be clear from above table that the poverty of Maharashtra as well as all India was declined. But as per Tendulkar committee's report in the year 2009-10 national poverty compared to state is declined by 5 percent more .

Maharashtra Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MREGS):

On February 2, 2006 the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) or National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) came into force in 2006 and covered India's most backward districts. In year 2007 it was extended to cover another 130 districts and from April 1, 2008, the act is to cover all of rural India.

It is well-known fact that the National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme (NREGS) as a part of the common minimum program on UPA Government. It is based on Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme (MEGS) for which an act was passed in 1976. The scheme ran until February 2006. It was converted into the Maharashtra Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MREGS), under the guidance of the NREGA.

In the year 2006, MREGS covered 12 districts. Nanded district is one of them. In this district 16 blocks, Kinwat block was declared as a tribal block and is also covered in MREGS.

Adivasi (Tribal Community) and Maharashtra:

Adivasi community known as an exploited community from the ancient period. In Maharashtra adivasi socially and economically are very backward. Main occupation of adivasis is farming. Near about 85% livelihood on farming out of them 40% people do farming and 45% are farm labour.

In Maharashtra population of tribal community in the Konkan division (13.08 Lakh), Nashik division (25.21 Lakh), Pune division (3.08 Lakh), Aurangabad division (5.80 Lakh), Amrawati division (10.13 Lakh) and Nagpur division (15.88 Lakh). Near about 74 Lakh adivasi in Maharashtra. The percentage of adivasi as total population is 8.9

Thane, Nasik, Jalgaon, Dhule, Ahmadnagar, Pune, Amrawati, Yawatmal, Nagpur, Bhandara, Chandrapur, Garchilori, Raigad, Nanded districts have the largest concentration of adivasis.

ITDP (Integrated Tribal Development Program) declared by Indian government in 1975-76. To improve the adivasi community socio-economic development. ITDP covered 14 districts of Maharashtra. Nanded also covered under it.

Kinwat block and Adivasi:-

Total population of Nanded district is 28,76,259; out of these 2,23,596 are adivasis. The percentage of adivasis as to total population is 8.83 Percent. Many adivasis live In Kinwat block a tribal area (tribal block). Thus total popu-

lation of Kinwat block is 2,10,630 and out of these population 58,527 are adivasis. The percentage of adivasis in the total population is 27.79 per cent.

In Kinwat block so many families are in Below Poverty Line (BPL), according to Census 2001. In Kinwat block 20288 families are adivasi families, out of these families 17,837 are under BPL. The percentage of BPL families in the total number of families is 87.92 per cent.

Objectives of the study:-

The chief objectives of the study are as follows –

1) To know the socio-economic condition of adivasis in general Nanded district, particularly in Kinwat block.
2) To identify the role of MREGS as an instrument for employment generation and rural development.
3) To evaluate the role of MREGS as an anti-poverty programme.
4) To specify the role of MREGS for the upliftment of poverty in adivasi families in general and particular in BPL adivasi families.

Hypothesis:-

1) Most of the adivasi families in Kinwat block are BPL families.
2) A major reason for adivasi family being BPL is lack of regular employment.
3) MREGS has been successfully providing employment to adivasi families.
4) MREGS has had positive impact on poverty of adivasi families in this block.

Research Methodology:-

In the study, the researcher used both the primary and secondary data. The primary data have been collect through **personal interview schedule,** which is open and close ended. The secondary data have been collected from, various Government Reports, Economic Survey of India, Economic Survey of

Maharashtra, Rural Development and Tribal development ministry of India's website, Census of India and Maharashtra, District socio-economic reviews, and other related websites.

I have conducted a survey of 250 adivasi families, from 25 different, purposively selected tribal villages in the Kinwat block of Nanded district. We selected such villages where government has provided work under MGNREGS, and those workers who are going on MGNREGS work. From each village 10 adivasi families have been selected. Thus, 250 samples were selected with the use of purposively sampling.

Chapter summary:-

Our study has been divided in five chapters-

Chapter 1:- Introduction

The first chapter covers the introduction to the study. Rationale for topic, explaining the background against which is the study is conducted and measurement of poverty in India, concept of poverty, poverty measurement and various study in India, Anti-poverty programmes in India.

Chapter 2:- Economic Structure of Nanded District

This chapter is dividing into two separate sections section A and B. In section A, we have studied as 'Nanded district profile' and in section B, we have studied 'Kinwat block profile.'

Chapter 3:- Research Methodology and Review of Literature

In this chapter present details of objectives, hypothesis and methodology of the study. The chapter also includes detail review of the literature related to the subject.

Chapter 4:- Role of MREGS in Adivasi Block

This chapter relates to detail study of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) or NREGA. In this chapter also data analysis and interpretation of the primary data.

Chapter 5:- Findings and Recommendations

In the last chapter of the study presents the findings, conclusion and recommendations.

Findings:-

1) For most of the adivasi families, their living standard is very poor.
2) There are no more sources of employment opportunities in the adivasi villages other than seasonal agricultural employment.
3) Our total sample of 250 adivasis includes 52.55 percent female and 47.45 percent, male workers going on MGNREGS work. Most of them are in the age group of 30-45 years.
4) Literacy rate of adivasi MGNREGS workers is very low.
5) It also seen that in our total sample, 31 percent ration card holders are BPL, 34 percent card holders are AAY and 18 percent are APL.
6) The main occupation of the household respondents of MGNREGS workers is: 57.64 percent are cultivators who also do agricultural labour, while 42.36 percent perform only agricultural labour. We did not find a single person having self-employment in any non-agricultural work.
7) Most of MGNREGS workers have deposited their job-card with the gramrojgar sevak.
8) Work of MGNREGS in all the villages is less than 100 days, except for two villages: Dongargaon and Waitagwadi. In these two villages, the MGNREGS workers are employed in a nursery for various saplings.
9) The access to employment under the MGNREGS was not uniform in Kinwat

block. It is much better in some villages like Dongargaon and Waitagwadi as compared to other villages.

10) The MGNREGS Act is not being implemented in proper manner, especially with regard to child care and use of machines. Machines are used to carry out some kinds of work cheaply and quickly, while a large number of workers are shown to be working. They are asked to stay way from work and given only partial payment. The children of women workers are looked after by the women on the site. There is provision for paying one or two women workers who will only have the work of looking after children; but this provision is not implemented.
11) Out of our sample of 250, 50 per cent MGNREGS workers are landholders and 50 percent worker are landless, 60 per cent landholders have under 1 to 3 acres, 38.4 percent landholders have 3 to 5 acres and 1.6 per cent have under 5 to 1o acres of land.
12) Crèche, shade, water and first aid etc. these basic amenities should be provided to the workers at the work site, according to the provisions of the MGNREGS Act. But nothing was being provided except drinking water at work place.
13) It was found that basic cause of joining of MGNREGS is that work is available at the doorstep.
14) When I was visiting the villages it was seen that in out of 25 villages many types of work is done under MGNREGS like in 11 villages approach roads, in 5 villages CPT and LBS works, in 4 villages water harvesting programs, in 11 villages personal wells and in 2 villages nursery work is going on.
15) There is wage differentiation between male and female workers on MGNREGS work and agricultural labour, even though the Act provides for equal wages to male and female workers.
16) It also found that mode of wages of MGNREGS workers through cash in hand is 52.8 per cent and 47.2 per cent through post office.

17) Most of workers say that time taken to get wages is 5 to 6 months after the work is completed.
18) It has seen that in Kinwat block MGNREGA pushes up the agricultural wage rate prevailing in the local economy.
19) In the Act there is provision that where there are children under the age of 5 years with female workers, one female worker should be deputed to childcare but in fact that there is no female worker deputed in this work.
20) For tribal people there exist so many economically beneficial schemes for development of there living standards but they do not reach the actual beneficiary.

Recommendations:-

For works to be productivity enhancing and for effective social accountability, some reforms need to be introduced in MGNREGA implementation. i.e.

1) Government should nominate a special mechanism to implementation on MGNREGA in a proper manner.
2) Not only economic benefits help in empowerments of tribal people but also they have right of quality life and right to live with dignity. So it is the governments duty to make sure that real social security must be provided to these workers and their families.
3) Government should be expand the limit of employment per household from 100days to 360 days through MGNREGS.
4) Payment of MGNREGS at the weekend or bazaar day.
5) Provision of adequate resources and setting up systems for continuous monitoring and evaluation at every stage of the programme to insure quality.
6) Greater use of information technology to infuse more transparency, accountability and speed at all stages, from sanction of work, release of funds, wage payments to social audit.

7) Inclusion of skill-oriented and women-oriented work in the type of works permitted under the MGNREGS;
8) Enforcement of the women-specific provisions policies and programmes.
9) Revising the schedule of rates, so that they are in line with a programme that bans machines and contractors.

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